

**La Rue Declaration**  
**Ex. F**

The New York Times

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## Council Bill Eases Restriction On Union Political Donations

By WINNIE HU; JIM RUTENBERG CONTRIBUTED REPORTING FOR THIS ARTICLE.

The City Council pushed through a bill yesterday that would allow labor unions to greatly increase their donations to political candidates, the most significant loosening of contribution limits since the city's campaign finance program was established in 1988.

In doing so, the Council overruled the Campaign Finance Board, the independent agency charged with enforcing the city's campaign finance rules; and all but ignored government watchdog groups' pleas that it wait for the normal review process that follows every city election. The Council's approval also ran against the wishes of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

By a vote of 44 to 3 with one abstention, the Council approved a bill that would allow different local chapters of the same union to be counted as distinct sources of contributions, under specific conditions. Currently, no single source may contribute more than \$2,750 to Council candidates, or \$4,950 to candidates in citywide races.

"It's undermining the whole campaign finance program," said Gene Russianoff, a senior lawyer for the New York Public Interest Research Group, who testified against the bill yesterday. "It's completely unnecessary, and it's a sign that when the unions say jump, the Council leaps."

The campaign finance bill gained wide support among council members at a time when unions and their lobbyists have increasingly become a force in city elections as well as in Council politics. All seven council members vying to become the next speaker signed on to sponsor the bill.

Council members have a more antagonistic relationship with the Campaign Finance Board, which has often fined them for various violations.

The campaign finance bill has become a post-election test for Mr. Bloomberg, who has portrayed himself as philosophically opposed to any measure giving outside interests more influence in government through political donations. That was before Mr. Bloomberg was re-elected this month with the support of dozens of unions. Council and labor leaders have been watching closely to see whether he will soften his position by allowing the bill to pass, in a nod to his new union allies.

Yesterday, Mr. Bloomberg announced that he would veto the bill, but at the same time he expressed sympathy with the unions' position. He said he would veto it only because he believed that the Council had a conflict of interest in legislating on campaign finance.

"The City Council should not be passing a law where they are the direct beneficiaries -- the conflict is insurmountable," Mr. Bloomberg said. "They just should not be going there at all."

But, the mayor also said emphatically, "Conceptually, I think that each individual local union should be able to give money to whomever they want and not be restricted by what another part of the amalgamation or conglomeration of unions does."

Council leaders said they expected to have the 34 votes needed to override the mayoral veto.

Frederick A. O. Schwarz Jr., the chairman of the Campaign Finance Board, testified yesterday that the bill would create a loophole that would enable unions to exceed contribution limits. He repeatedly urged the Council not to pass the bill, saying there was no rush because there would not be another citywide election for four years.

Last winter, the Campaign Finance Board proposed a rule that contributions from a union's local chapters or affiliated organizations would be presumed to be from a single source. The officials said the rule merely clarified what they had been doing all along.

They agreed to withdraw the rule after council members and union officials objected.

Brian M. McLaughlin, president of the Central Labor Council, said yesterday that the bill would prevent the Campaign Finance Board from imposing "a restrictive rule that completely undermines democracy and free speech by denying a voice to working men and women."

Councilwoman Madeline Provenzano of the Bronx said she voted against the bill because it would not be fair to exempt only unions from contribution limits. Ms. Provenzano said unions had become more influential than lobbyists in the Council.

"I think most of them voted yes because they are courting the unions and because they're going to need them in future elections, you know, whatever their plans are," she said. "Unions have a big influence. I've always been pro-union, but in this case, they're wrong."

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**La Rue Declaration**  
**Ex. H**



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## Number of Small Campaign Contributors Soars

By ABRAHAM RIESMAN, Special to the Sun | July 25, 2008

<http://www.nysun.com/new-york/number-of-small-campaign-contributors-soars/82634/>

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE MAKING SMALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CITYWIDE ELECTORAL campaigns has soared in the past six months, largely due to campaign finance reforms, according to a report issued yesterday by the city's campaign finance board.

As of January 11, only 57% of all donors to citywide campaigns gave sums of \$250 or less, which is the board's definition of a "small donor," the report stated. But during the six months following that date, about 72% of all donors gave small contributions.

If that upward trend continues, the 2009 election cycle could have the highest proportion of small donors in the past decade, according to data issued in the report.

The board attributed the shift to recent legislation that encourages small donations by placing more restrictions on donors who have business dealings with the city and by providing matching funds for the first \$175 of any contribution from a city resident.

In the same six months, however, overall fund-raising slowed by about 15%, according to data from the board database.